

1 Samuel 26 - Thursday, September 4th, 2014

1 Now the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding in the hill of Hachilah, opposite Jeshimon?" 2 Then Saul arose and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the Wilderness of Ziph. 3 And Saul encamped in the hill of Hachilah, which is opposite Jeshimon, by the road. But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. 4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul had indeed come.

- So right out of the shoot here, I should probably apprise you of the "déjà vu," for lack of a better word, that awaits us here in God's Word.
- This because it's a round two of sorts as it relates to the Ziphites, and even Saul, both of who will conspire together so as to kill David.
- While we know they won't succeed, God has deemed it necessary that the Holy Spirit inspire the writer to include details in this narrative.

- One such detail is that the Ziphites who had already betrayed David once back in 1 Samuel 23:19-23, are about to betray him again here.
- The reason I point this out is that for them to do this a second time speaks to their sinful complicity in Saul's demonic desire to kill David.
- I suppose it could be argued that the first time, they may have done this under the banner of David being guilty and Saul being innocent.

One commentator of the Ziphites wrote, "Everyone knew that David was an innocent person, so reporting his whereabouts to Saul was assisting Saul in fulfilling his intention to shed innocent blood."

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most, if not the most, grievous things a Christian could ever do this would have to be it.
- More specifically, the betrayal of and complicity in unrighteousness and sinfulness knowing full well that the recipient of it is truly innocent.
- Thankfully, those who become perpetrators of such an evil effort, though they may seem to get away with it for a season, will fall in the end.

Psalms 37:1-17 NKJV A Psalm of David. Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. (2) For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. (3) Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. (4) Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. (5) Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. (6) He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday. (7) Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. (8) Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret—it only causes harm. (9) For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth. (10) For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more. (11) But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. (12) The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth. (13) The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming. (14) The wicked have drawn the sword And have bent their bow, To cast down the poor and needy, To slay those who are of upright conduct. (15) Their sword shall enter their own heart, And their bows shall be broken. (16) A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. (17) For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, But the LORD upholds the righteous.

- There's something else here that I'd like for us to see before we move on and it has to do with why David would go back in the first place.
- The answer to why he would go back is further evidence of his aforementioned innocence such that, he gives them the benefit of the doubt.
- The reason I say that is because innocent people will usually think people are innocent and conversely guilty people think people are guilty.

- This explains why David would send out his men as spies to confirm whether or not he's being wise in giving Saul the benefit of the doubt.
- As we see in verse four, his fears were confirmed that indeed, Saul had gone back on his word to David that he would never pursue him.
- Sadly, scenarios such as this play out in so many ways in the churches in our day all because of the absence of both loyalty and integrity.

Proverbs 10:9 Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.

Proverbs 11:3 The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

Proverbs 13:6 Righteousness guards the person of integrity, but wickedness overthrows the sinner.

Proverbs 29:10 The bloodthirsty hate a person of integrity and seek to kill the upright.

5 So David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Now Saul lay within the camp, with the people encamped all around him. 6 Then David answered, and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother of Joab, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?" And Abishai said, "I will go down with you." 7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night; and there Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the people lay all around him. 8 Then Abishai said to David, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear, right to the earth; and I will not have to strike him a second time!"

- One has to wonder what's going through David's head right about now, especially as he looks at the very spear Saul tried to kill him with.
- How tempting it must have been to grab that very spear and killing Saul justify it, as God must be giving me a second chance to finally do it.
- It's interesting to note that the circumstances that would bring this second test about are quite different this time than they were the last.

- The first time, Saul didn't know where David was, and David didn't know where Saul was, whereas this time, David knew where Saul was.
- Also the first time Saul happened upon David unknowingly when he went to relieve himself in the very cave that David and his men were in.
- This time, David will knowingly and deliberately go to the very place where Saul and his men, who weren't with him last time, are sleeping.

- The reason I mention this is because David is demonstrating a level of faith and courage by virtue of how he approaches Saul this time.
- By that I mean, it takes both faith and courage to not only go, as he and only Abishai would do, but sometimes it takes more to not go for it.
- In other words, in light of the circumstances David, as we'll see next, not taking Saul's life, nor letting Abishai do it takes even more of both.

9 But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?" 10 David said furthermore, "As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish. 11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. But please, take now the spear and the jug of water that are by his head, and let us go." 12 So David took the spear and the jug of water by Saul's head, and they got away; and no man saw or knew it or awoke. For they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them.

- Couple of thoughts here the first of which has to do with God putting them into a deep sleep and the second is about David not killing Saul.
- First, as it relates to the deep sleep, this had a twofold affect in the sense that Saul and his men would have known it was God Who did it.
- Secondly, David would have not only known that God did it, he would have also understood why God did it, namely, it was to protect David.

- Actually this dovetails into the second thought related to David not killing him here's what I'm thinking David knew he wasn't the instrument.
- In other words, David was keenly discerning, and as such, aware of the fact that he would not be the instrument in God's hands to do this.
- Often times, whether it's to meet out justice, or reach out to minister, it may be that we are not the vessel or instrument God is going to use.

13 Now David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off, a great distance being between them. 14 And David called out to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Do you not answer, Abner?" Then Abner answered and said, "Who are you, calling out to the king?" 15 So David said to Abner, "Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy your lord the king. 16 This thing that you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because you have not guarded your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the jug of water that was by his head."

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is the way and to whom David addresses Saul's 3-thousand man army.
- First, instead of calling out Saul, he calls out Saul's men, which seems to indicate that he cared more about Saul's life than his men did.
- Secondly, he takes Saul's sword and water to show them he could've taken Saul's life but didn't as he rebukes them for not guarding him.

- At the risk of reading too much into this, let me explain where I'm going with this, both the sword and the water are a type of God's Word.
- I point this out because these are the very things that David takes so as to demonstrate how they had not guarded their master King Saul.
- The point being is that the Word of God is that which guards me, as a shield unto me, and if it's taken away, I become vulnerable to attack.

Psalms 119:114 You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.

Proverbs 30:5 "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him."

17 Then Saul knew David's voice, and said, "Is that your voice, my son David?" David said, "It is my voice, my lord, O king." 18 And he said, "Why does my lord thus pursue his servant? For what have I done, or what evil is in my hand? 19 Now therefore, please, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant: If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering. But if it is the children of men, may they be cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' 20 So now, do not let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD. For the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

- I can't even begin to imagine what Saul is thinking about now, given that he's been "found out," if you will, once again for the second time.
- Please know that Saul is as disingenuous as one can be when he says to David, "Is that your voice, my son David?" Are you kidding me!
- Be that as it may, Saul's dishonesty is quickly and thankfully overshadowed by David's honesty when he says "what have I done wrong?"

Adam Clarke of this wrote, "There is a vast deal of dignity in this speech of David, arising from a consciousness of his own innocence. He neither begs his life from Saul, nor offers one argument to prevail upon him to desist [stop] from his felonious attempts, but refers the whole matter to God, as the judge and vindicator of oppressed innocence."

- There's something else here that's quite remarkable before we move on to verse twenty-one and complete this most interesting chapter.
- Notice the reason David gives for saying his enemies are to be cursed is because they have kept him from worshipping with God's people.
- In other words, he doesn't want his enemies cursed because they forced him into exile rather, it's because they forced him away from God.

As one commentator so aptly said it, "...David's primary complaint against his enemies was not that they had forced him into exile, but that they had prevented him access to worshipping with His people."

21 Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly." 22 And David answered and said, "Here is the king's spear. Let one of the young men come over and get it. 23 May the LORD repay every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. 24 And indeed, as your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the LORD, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation." 25 Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, my son David! You shall both do great things and also still prevail." So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

- So the chapter ends with Saul's display of sorrow, yet again for the second time, only this time, Saul goes on to say something astonishing.
- What I'm speaking of his admission, though his sorrow is not a godly sorrow, that, "indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly."

F.B. Meyer of the both sorrows said it best this way, "The Apostle makes a great distinction, and rightly, between the sorrow of the world and the sorrow of a godly repentance which needeth not to be repented of. Certainly Saul's confession of sin belonged to the former; while the cry of the latter comes out in Psalm 51, extorted from David by the crimes after the years."

G. Campbell Morgan sums it up perfectly concerning Saul's words, "Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly: 'In these words we have a perfect autobiography. In them the complete life-story of this man is told.'"